



SENATE JUDICIARY

Exhibit No. 11

Date 4-3-07

Bill No. HB 281

April 3, 2007

TO: Chairman Laslovich and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Joy Bruck, Volunteer Advocate, AARP Montana

RE: **Opposition to HB 281, Election Law Revision**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee for the record my name is Joy Bruck, volunteer advocate for AARP Montana. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization with 153,000 members in Montana.

The right to vote, along with full and fair representation, is the most basic of all political rights. We believe Montana should adopt procedures that encourage and promote maximum participation in the electoral process by in-person and absentee voters. We support fair, simple and readily accessible voter registration procedures. HB 281 will repeal major gains we made last session to improve voter accessibility and increase voter turn-out.

We strongly supported passing late and Election Day registration last session and believe the 2006 election shows its success. Thousands of voters from all over the state took advantage of late registration, some first-time voters and some previously inactive voters who returned to the polls. We feel the large turn-out on Election Day shows Montanans need this procedure kept in place.

Above all, we want you to know that older generations in Montana are some of the most faithful and regular voters. We want to pass on to future generations the understanding that voting is essential in a democratic republic. We appreciate the incredible responsibility that is put on County Election Administrators and applaud their energy this past election. AARP is willing to help continue to improve late registration through outreach and education, but we will not support the repealer in HB 281.

Please vote no to HB 281.